

Claims 1-21 are pending in the present application.

I. FORMAL MATTERS

A. DRAWINGS

The Office Action does not indicate whether the formal drawings filed on July 25, 2001 are acceptable. Applicant respectfully requests the Examiner to do so.

B. PRIORITY DOCUMENTS

The Office Action does not acknowledge the claim to priority and does not indicate whether the priority document submitted on September 11, 2001 has been received. Applicant respectfully requests the Examiner to do so.

C. INFORMATION DISCLOSURE STATEMENTS

Applicant notes with appreciation the Examiner's indication that the Office Action includes a copy of the PTO Form 1449's submitted on March 4, 2002 and September 12, 2003. Each reference listed therein is initialed by the Examiner, thereby indicating that these references were considered by the Examiner, and will be listed on the first page of any issued patent.

II. PRIOR ART REJECTIONS

A. CLAIMS 1-12, 14-17, 20-21

Claims 1-12, 14-17, 20-21 are rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) as being unpatentable over White Paper: Virtual LAN Communication (Cisco) in view of U.S. Patent Number 4,721,954 (Mauch). This rejection is traversed.

The Examiner asserts that Cisco teaches all of the features of claim 1 except permitting only entry of a designated person. Relying on column 3, line 59 through column 4, line 33, the Examiner asserts that this feature is taught by Mauch. The Examiner further asserts that it would have been obvious to incorporate Mauch's restriction of access to the plurality of units in Cisco virtual LAN management system to enhance system security and restrict user access. The Examiner asserts that claim 21 is rejected on the same basis as claim 1.

Cisco teaches a local area network (LAN), wherein the LAN switches are segmented into virtual LAN's (VLAN's). Applicant submits that Cisco does not teach a plurality of VLAN's wherein a VLAN assigned to each of the units is different than the VLAN's assigned to the other units. For example, as shown in Fig. 5 of Cisco, there are four network devices assigned to each of VLAN 1 and VLAN 2. Mauch is directed to a key-code system for opening up hotel doors and fails to make up for this deficiency of Cisco. Therefore, the combination of Cisco and Mauch does not form the invention of claims 1 and 21. Thus, Applicant submits that the rejection of claims 1 and 21 under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) is improper. Claims 2-12, 14-17, and 20 depend on claim 1 and would not have been obvious over Cisco in view of Mauch for the reasons presented above with respect to claim 1.

B. CLAIMS 13 and 18-19

Claims 13 and 18-19, are rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) as being unpatentable over Cisco in view of Mauch, and further in view of U.S. Patent Number 6,167,052 (McNeill). This rejection is traversed.

The Examiner admits that Cisco does not teach a DHCP server. The Examiner asserts that McNeill teaches a DHCP operable to assign an IP address to one of the network devices and that it would have been obvious to incorporate McNeill's assigning of resources in the Cisco's system in order to improve system effectiveness.

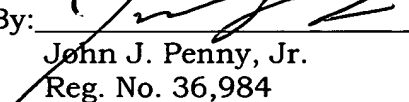
Applicant submits that McNeill fails to make up for the above-noted deficiencies of Cisco and Mauch. Therefore, the combination of Cisco, Mauch and McNeill does not form the invention of claims 13 and 18-19. Thus, Applicant submits that the rejection of claims 13 and 18-19 under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) is improper.

Based on the foregoing, Applicant submits that the present application is now in condition for allowance and respectfully solicits allowance of the same. If the Examiner believes that any issues could be resolved by a telephone conference, Applicant respectfully requests that the Examiner contact the undersigned at the telephone number listed below.

Applicant believes that no additional fees are due for the subject application. However, if for any reason a fee is required, a fee paid is inadequate or credit is owed for any excess fee paid, you are hereby authorized and requested to charge Deposit Account No. 04-1105.

Respectfully submitted,

Dated: 3/4/04

By: 
John J. Penny, Jr.
Reg. No. 36,984
EDWARDS & ANGELL, LLP
P.O. Box 55874
Boston, MA 02205
Tel: (617) 439-4444
Fax: (617) 439-4170